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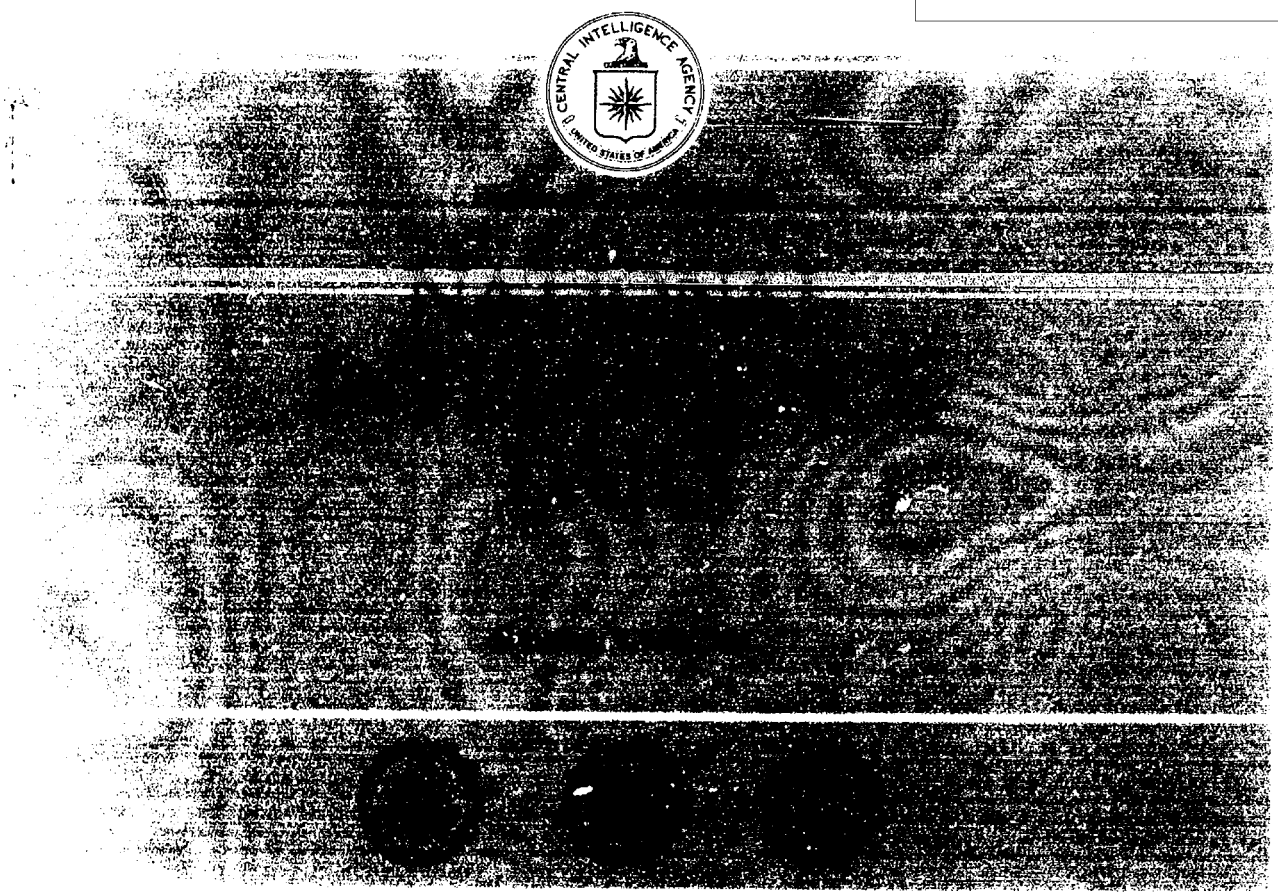

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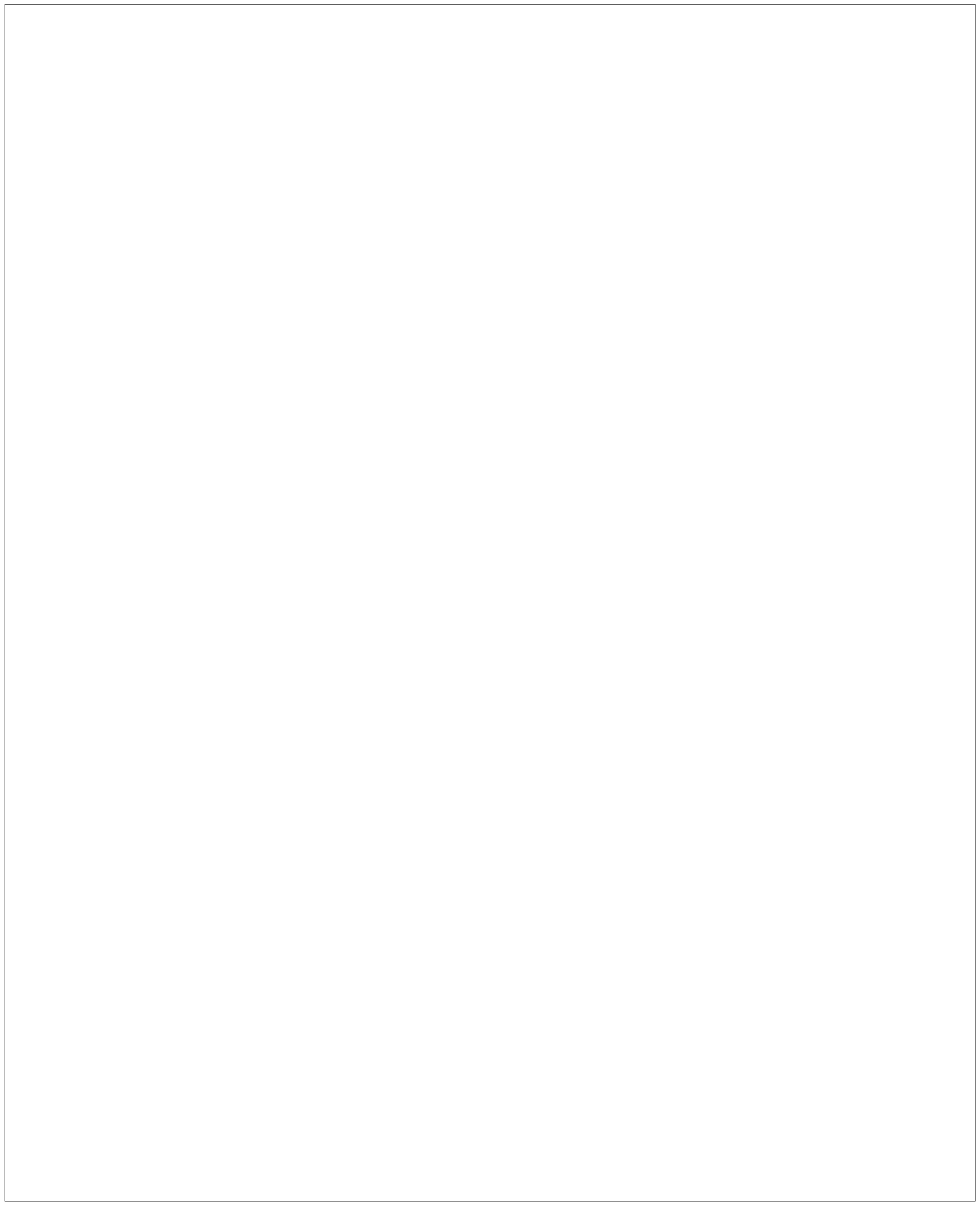

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LIBERIA: **Temporary Standoff**

Liberian President Doe is continuing to search for a political solution to the crisis as the rebels ready for more fighting.

Meanwhile, the situation in Liberia yesterday remained fluid as the government retained control of a portion of the Firestone Rubber Plantation while the rebels appeared to be gathering forces for a counterattack. Fighting tapered off yesterday afternoon, but power and communications have been cut off. The foreign management staff has decided to stay at the plantation for now. Although the government plans to send reinforcements, they have yet to arrive.

Meanwhile, Monrovia is tense as food and gasoline supplies have further dwindled. The government has mounted a media campaign claiming victory at the plantation and pressing for a cease-fire and church-mediated talks, but people continue to flee the capital.

Comment: Doe may finally realize how fragile his position has become and may be looking for a face-saving way to leave the country. The rebels would be unlikely to agree to hold elections at this time while further insurgent gains probably would strengthen Doe's resolve to flee.

Government troops are unlikely to hold out at the plantation for long. The rebels have the momentum and numbers and probably will force Doe's troops to fall back. Once the rebels retake the plantation they probably will regroup and resupply before pushing on toward Monrovia.

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ISRAEL: **New Shamir Government Likely on Monday**

Shamir yesterday signed an agreement on guidelines for a new government with 62 of the Knesset's 120 members, probably paving the way for him to win Monday's Knesset vote of confidence.

A Labor Party defector and all the religious and rightwing parties except the Agudat Yisrael religious faction signed the agreement. Shamir has told President Herzog that on Monday he will present his government for a Knesset vote of confidence.

Former Defense Minister Rabin said Thursday that the Labor Party should work in opposition to bring down the new government. Rabin emphasized that Labor needs to appeal to rightwing voters.

Comment: The new government almost certainly will take hardline positions on the Arab-Israeli peace process and push for new settlements in the occupied territories. The failed PLO attack removes any immediate pressure on Shamir to show progress on the peace process, although he cannot ignore it indefinitely. Some Knesset members from the religious party SHAS might eventually support a Labor-led motion to bring Shamir down; SHAS brought down the national unity government in March over Shamir's foot-dragging on peace. His success in bringing Agudat Yisrael into the coalition may be crucial to his government's survival.

Rabin may challenge Shimon Peres's leadership of the Labor Party. Rabin is better placed politically to challenge a Shamir government, and Peres repeatedly has been outmaneuvered by Shamir over the past three months.

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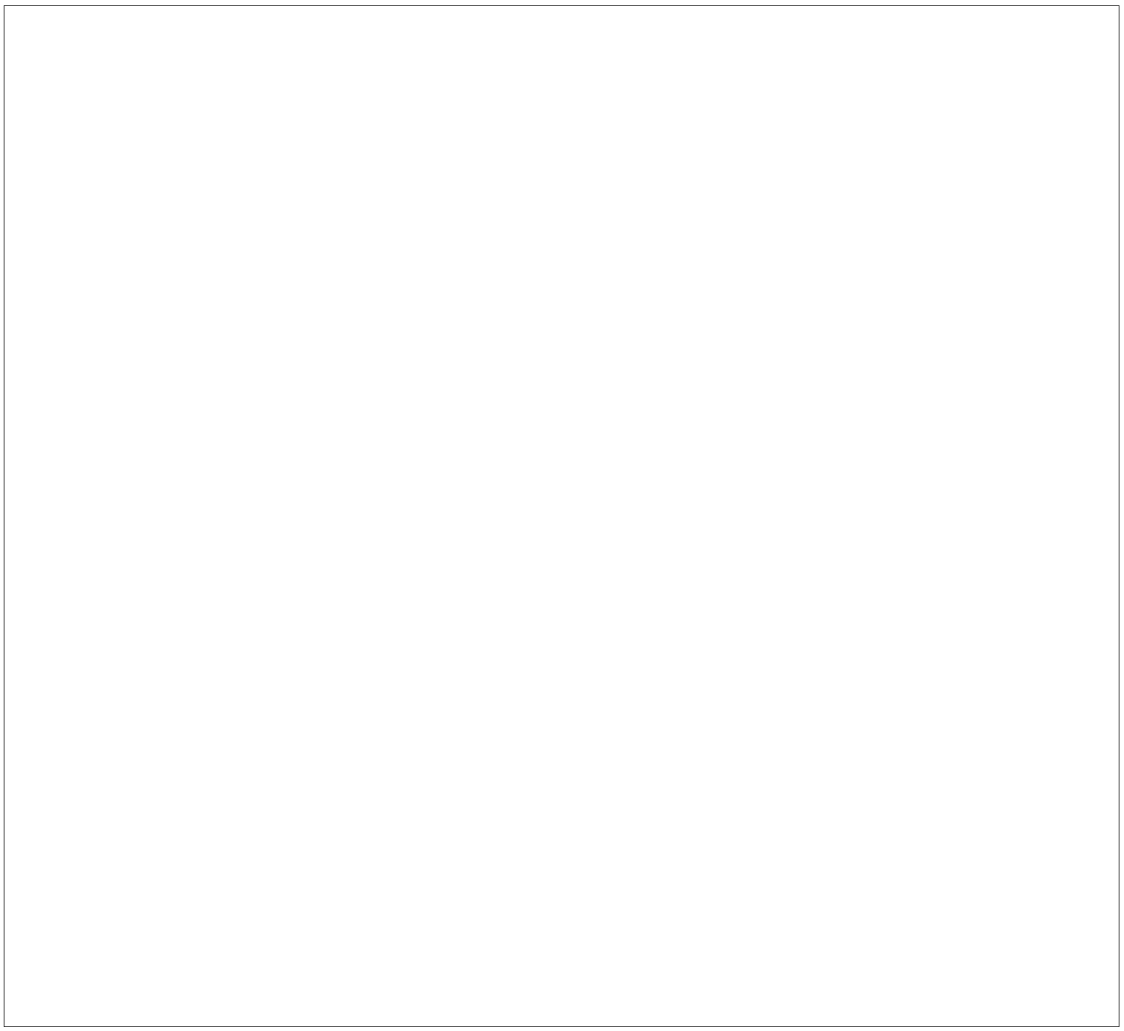

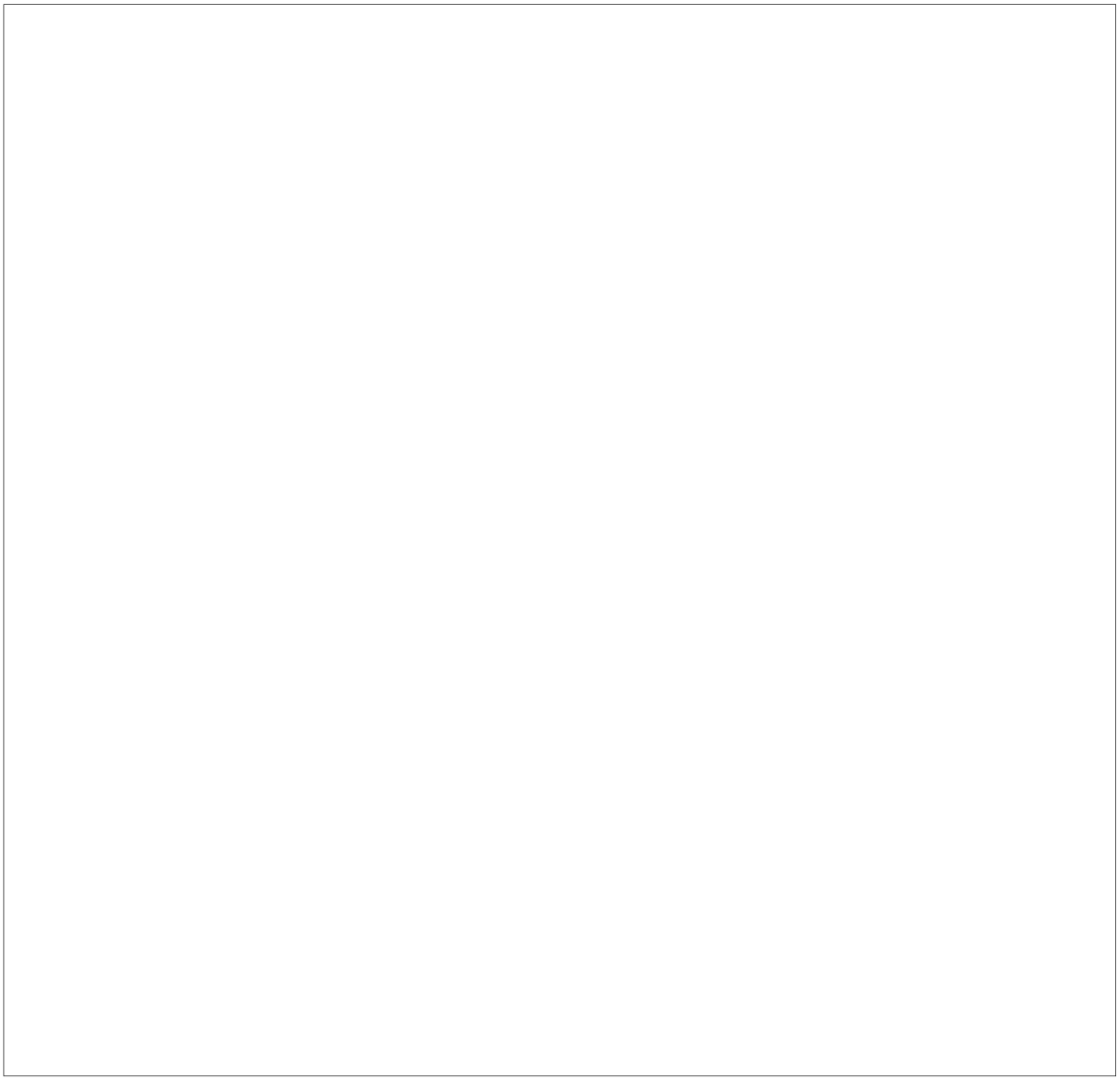

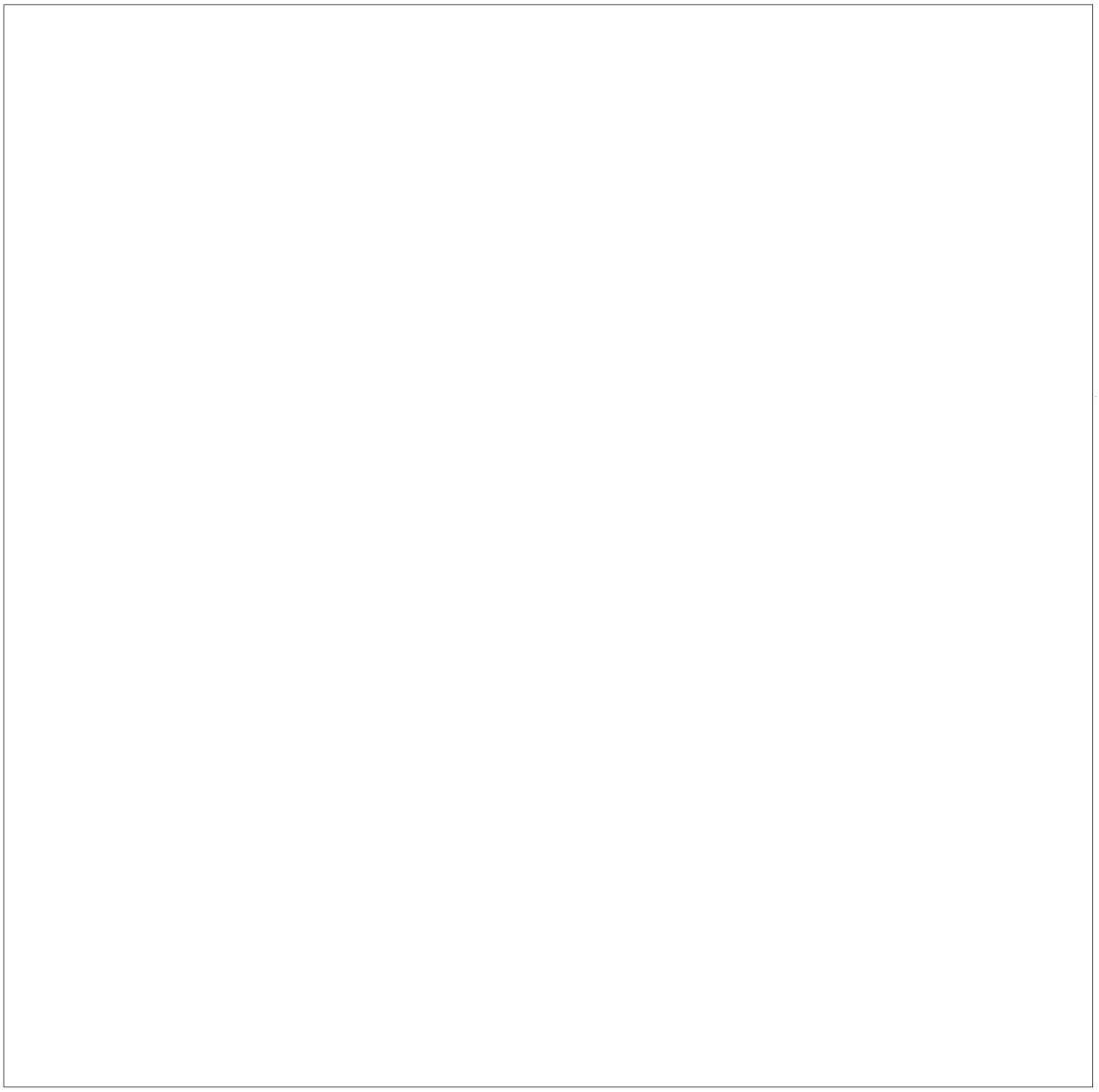

USSR: Russia Edging Toward Sovereignty

The Russian Republic legislature yesterday overwhelmingly approved language giving the republic constitution precedence over Soviet laws. It is part of a draft declaration of sovereignty that reportedly will be ready for consideration by midweek. Congress chairman Boris Yel'tsin, disregarding President Gorbachev's criticism, has strongly supported a sovereignty declaration. Gorbachev yesterday told reporters that the legislature has not yet done anything illegal.

Comment: By not condemning the legislature's actions, Gorbachev appears to be trying to avoid a confrontation for now. A declaration of sovereignty containing the new article, however, will contravene the Soviet Constitution and will further strain Gorbachev's relations with Yel'tsin. Yel'tsin has championed republic sovereignty, and Soviet commentators say a majority of legislators also supported some form of republic sovereignty during their electoral campaigns. Moscow almost certainly will declare these actions illegal, but it has no legal power to force the legislature to rescind its action.

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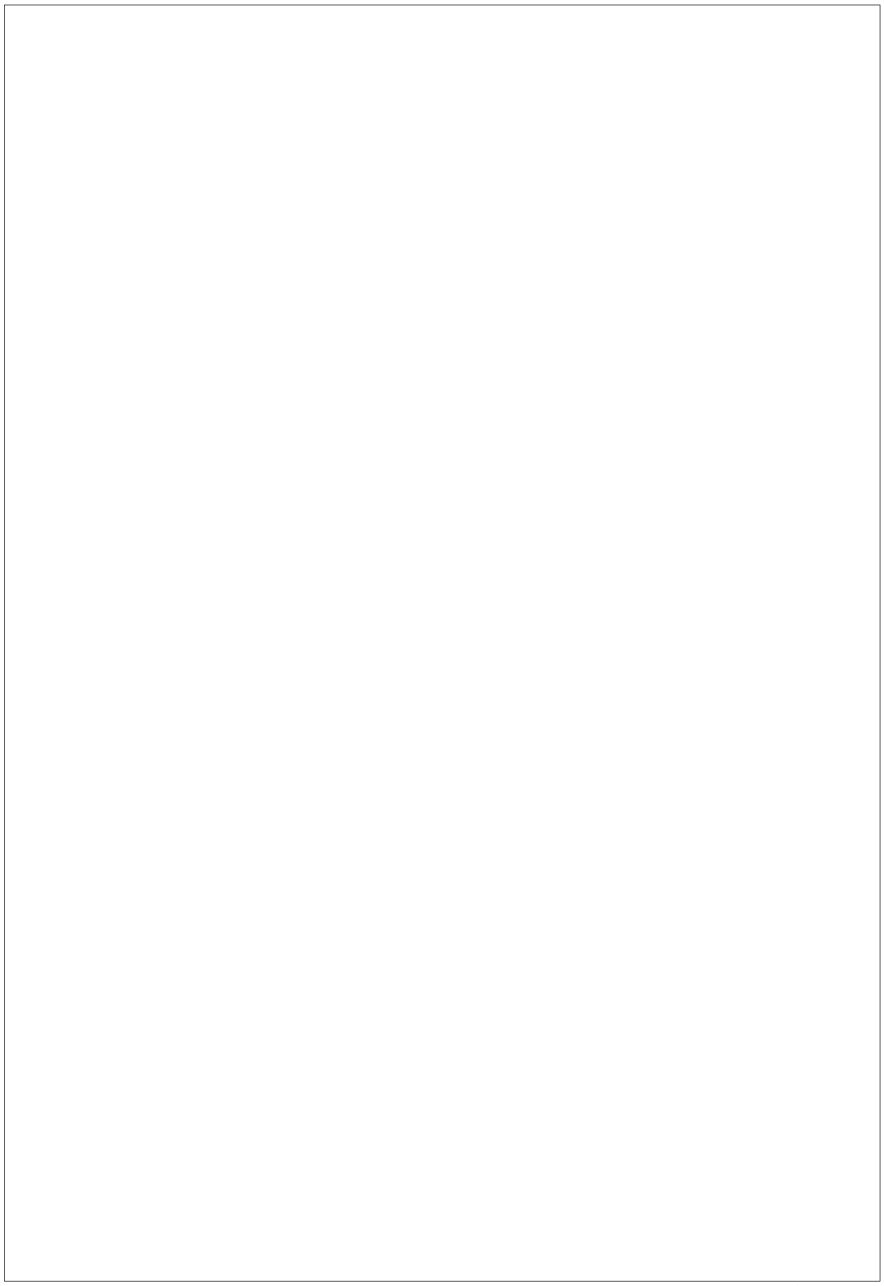

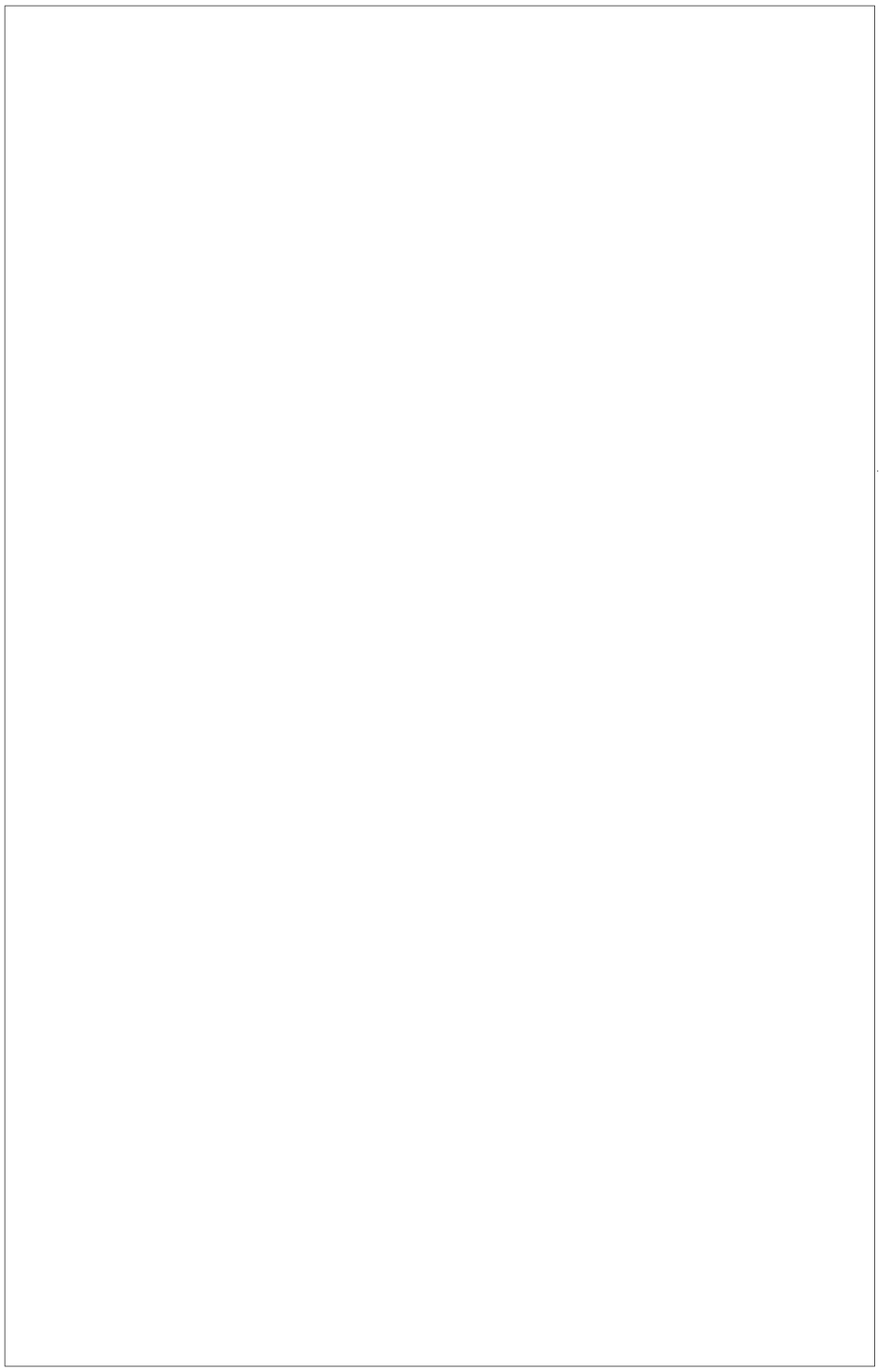

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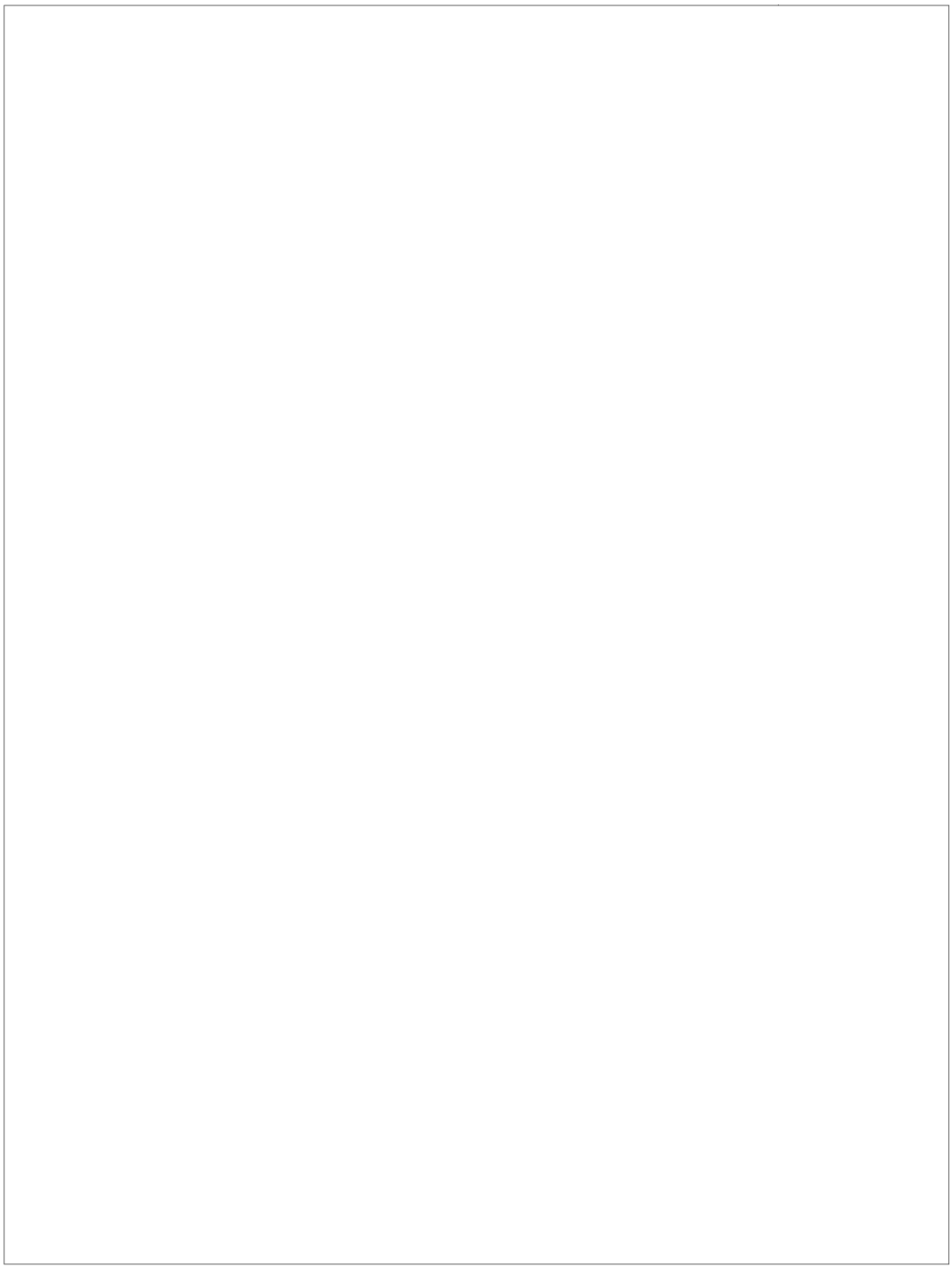

In Brief

Middle East

— In **Tunisia**, opposition parties boycotting local elections set for tomorrow . . . in **Algeria**'s local elections Tuesday, ruling party faces showdown with Islamic fundamentalists.

East Asia

— **Japan**'s ruling Liberal Democratic Party, Socialists battling in close upper house byelection tomorrow . . . LDP victory would help it forge majority with moderates in upper house and enact legislative agenda.

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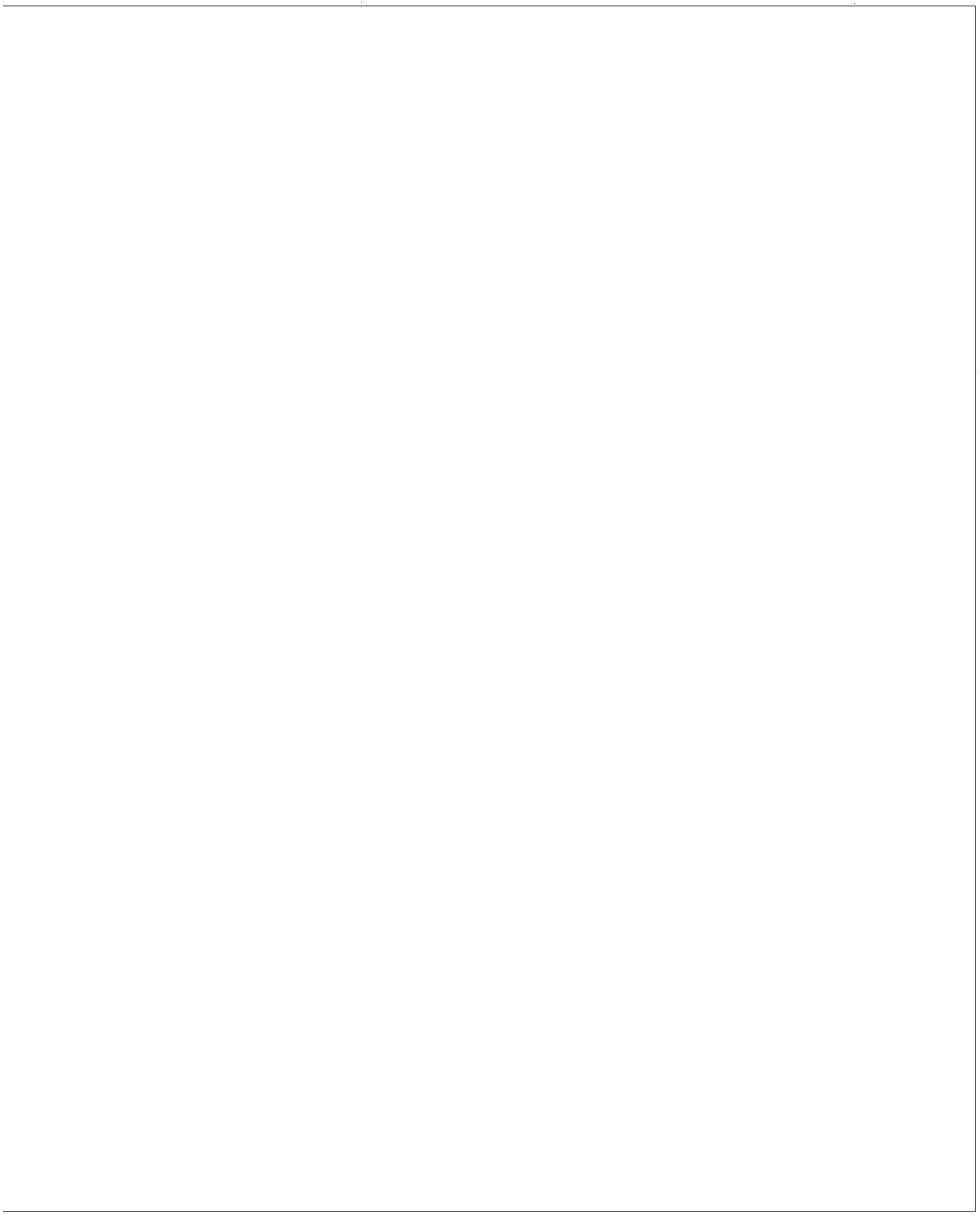

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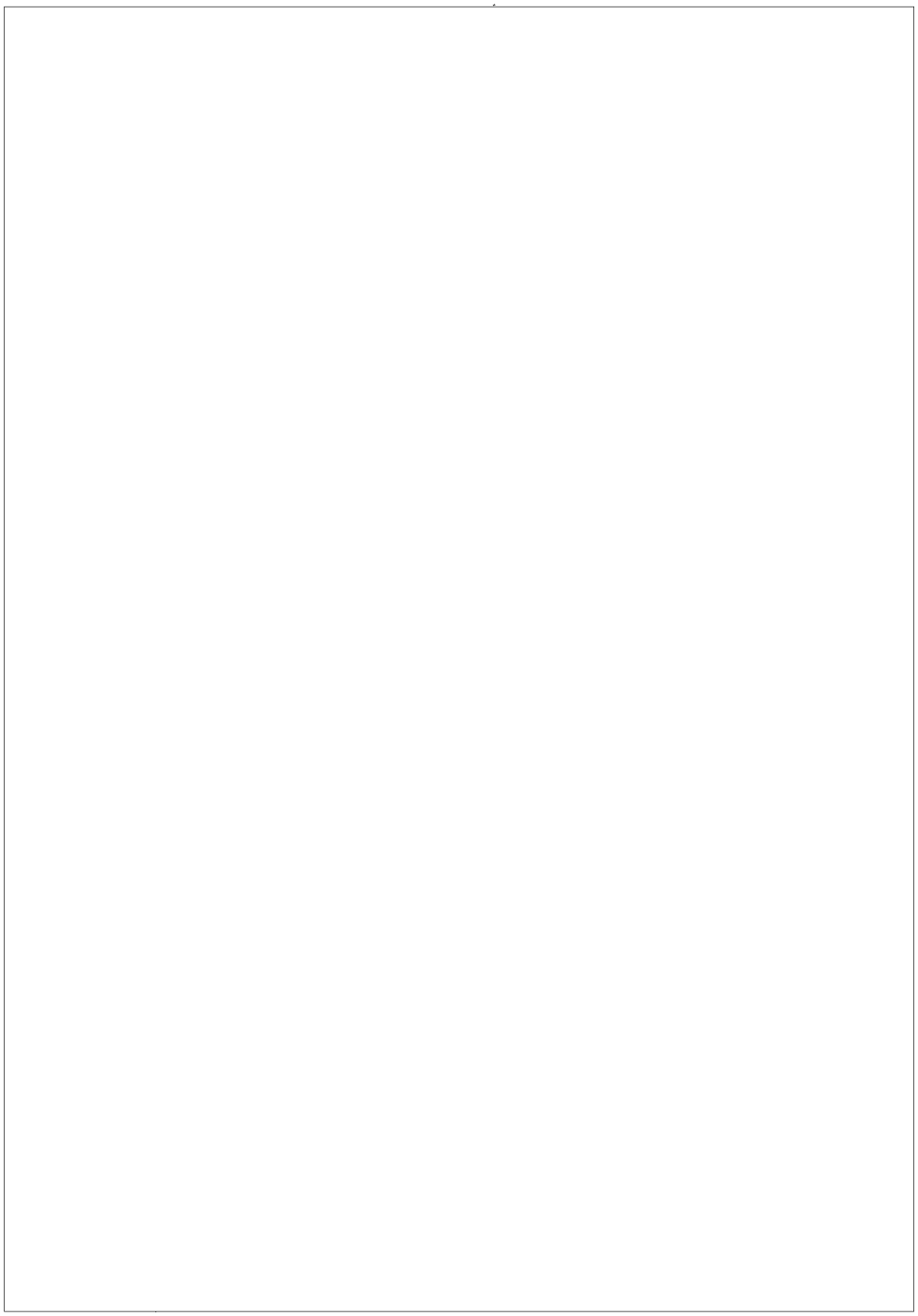

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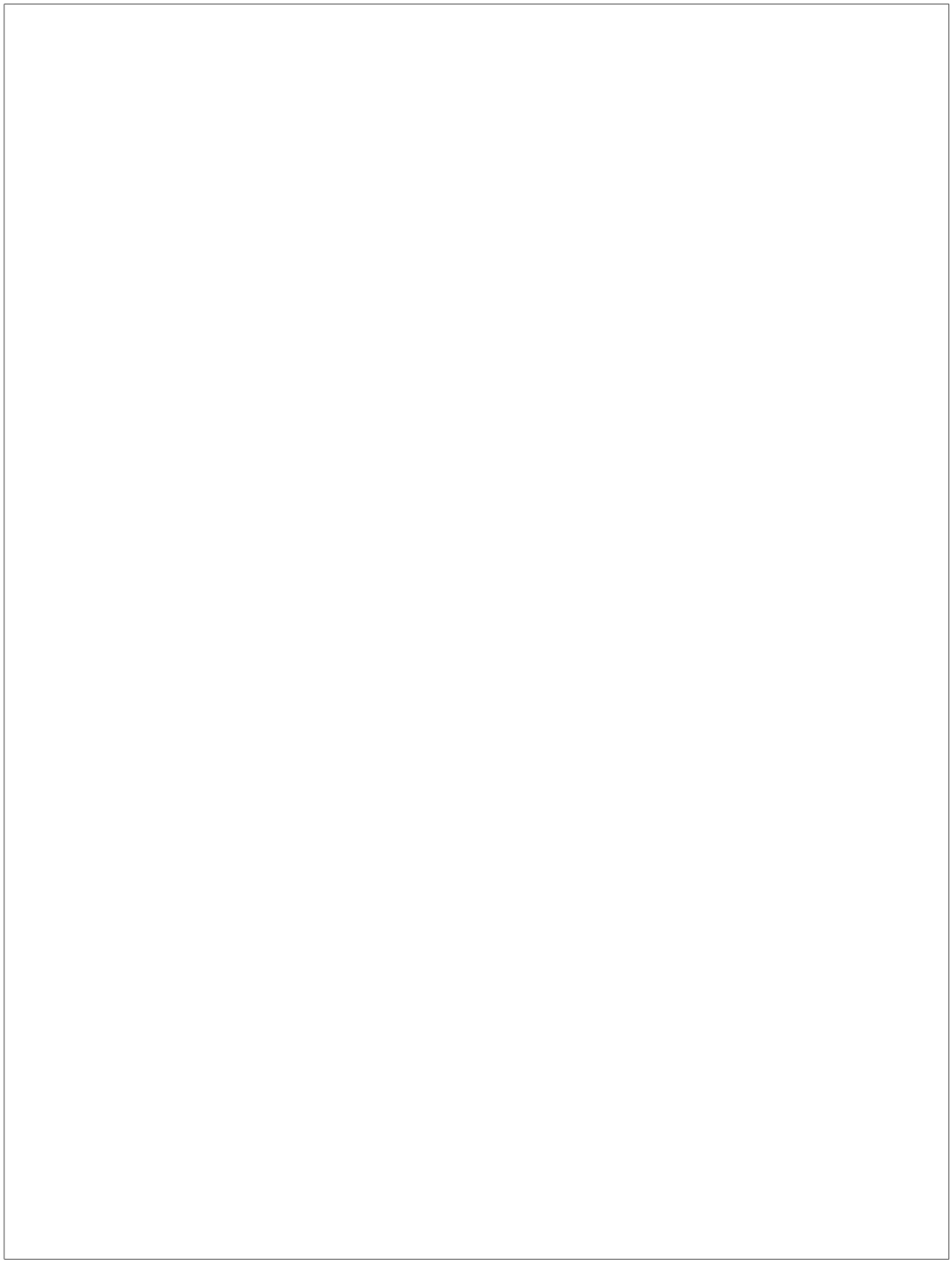

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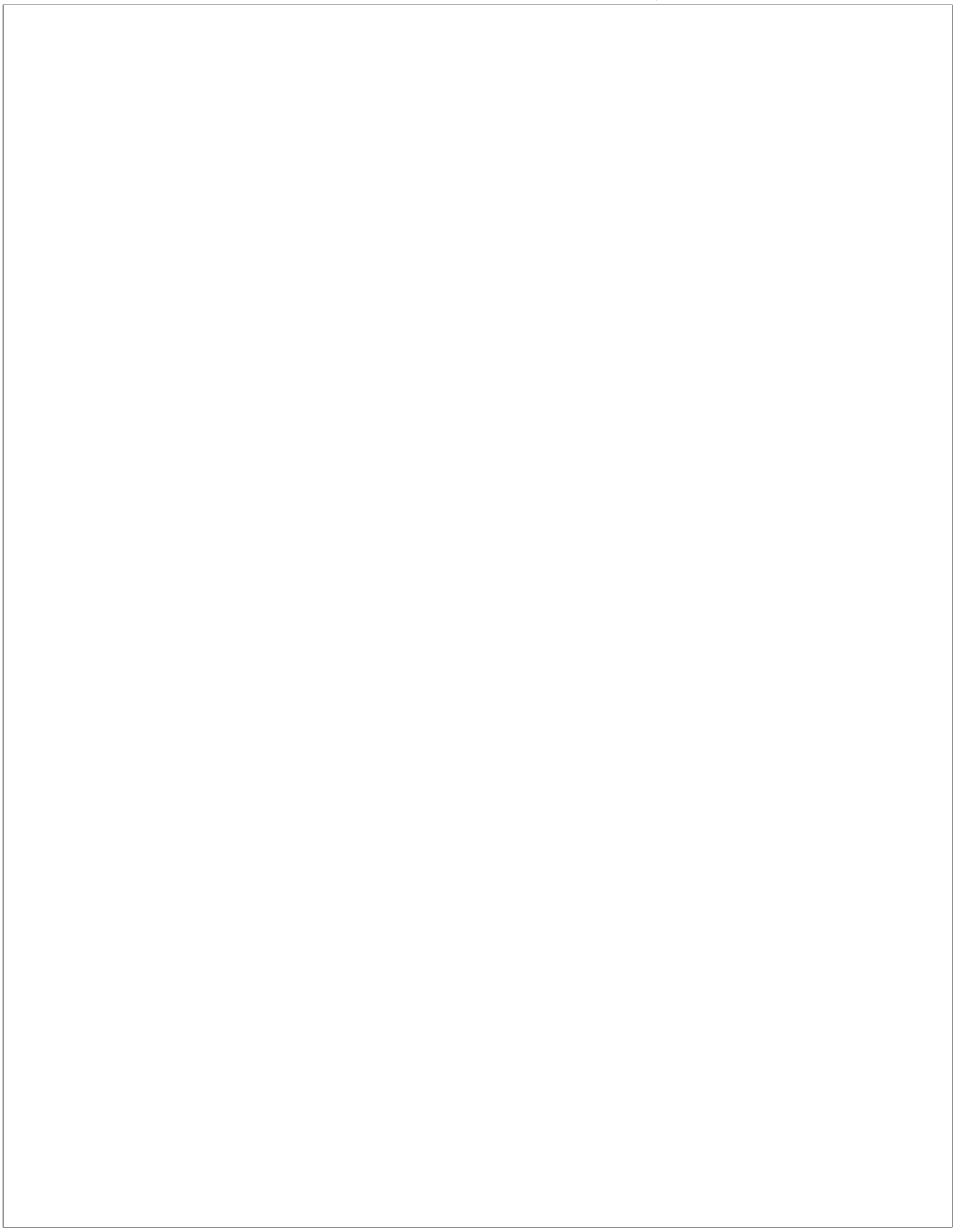

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